

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-11

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USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY

EUCOM PRIORITY

AMCONSUL ADANA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY

AMCONSUL IZMIR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 7421

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TU

SUBJ: ECEVIT RESIGNATION AND RESULTING TURKISH POLITICAL SITUATION

1. DURING COURSE OF MY MEETING WITH PRIMIN ECEVIT ON SEPT 17 AND AFTER COVERING OTHER MATTERS (SEPTELS), HE TURNED TO SUBJECT OF HIS CABINET'S RESIGNATION AND RESULTING POLITICAL SITUATION.

2. ECEVIT COMMENTED THAT IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR THE SITUATION IN CYPRUS, HE COULD HAVE PUT UP WITH HIS COALITION PARTNER, THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (MNSP), FOR A LONGER TIME. HE HAD FOUND, HOWEVER, THAT ACTIONS OF DEPUTY PRIMIN ERBAKSAN (NSP LEADER) HAD BEEN TOO ERRATIC AND HAD GIVEN WORLD WRONG IMPRESSION OF TURKEY'S MOTIVES AND OBJECTIVES

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IN CYPRUS.

3. ECEVIT SAID AS A RESULT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, HE HAD BEEN TALKING WITH FERRUH BOZBEYLI, LEADER OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (A GROUP WHICH SPLIT OFF FROM SULEYMAN DEMIREL'S JUSTICE PARTY--TURKEY'S MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTY). THE PRIMIN CONTINUED THAT IT WAS "LIKELY ALTHOUGH NOT CERTAIN" THAT HE AND BOZBEYLI WOULD FORM A NEW COALITION TO SERVE AS AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT UNTIL EARLY ELECTIONS COULD BE HELD. ECEVIT HAS IN MIND AN ELECTION IN EARLY DECEMBER, BUT HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT WHETHER THE COALITION COULD BE FORMED, AND WHETHER AN ELECTION THAT EARLY WOULD BE AGREED TO, AFTER BOZBEYLI HAD HAD A DAY OR SO TO CONSULT HIS PARTY'S RANK AND FILE. IF THIS NEW COALITION DID NOT WORK OUT, ECEVIT COMMENTED HE WOULD CONSIDER LEADING A MINORITY GOVERNMENT. (ON THE PREVIOUS DAY, SULEYMAN DEMIREL TOLD ME THAT HE WAS OPPOSED TO EARLY ELECTION AND WOULD DO ALL HE COULD TO "KILL" A MINORITY GOVERNMENT.)

4. THE PRIMIN SAID THAT, AS COMPARED TO HIS FORMER COALITION PARTNER, HIS PROSPECTIVE ONE WAS INFINITELY MORE RESPECTABLE AND RELIABLE. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIS PARTY AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY WERE PROBABLY GREATER THAN THOSE WITH THE ERBAKAN GROUP. FOR A SHORT TERM PRE-ELECTION GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, HE DID NOT THINK THESE DIFFERENCES WOULD CAUSE ANYTHING LIKE THE DIFFICULTIES HE HAD BEEN HAVING WITH THE NSP.

5. AS FOR TIMING, ECEVIT THOUGHT SOME THREE TO FOUR WEEKS WOULD BE NEEDED TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT. I NOTED THIS WOULD MEAN MID-OCTOBER AND, IF ELECTIONS WERE SUBSEQUENTLY HELD IN DECEMBER, THIS WOULD MEAN TURKEY WOULD BE OPERATING FIRST WITH A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT AND THEN A PRE-ELECTION GOVERNMENT FOR AN EXTENDED TIME DURING A CRITICAL PERIOD. ECEVIT REPLIED THAT ON THE SUBJECT OF CYPRUS HE WOULD NOT, AS EITHER A CARETAKER OR PRE-ELECTION PRIME MINISTER, BE SIGNIFICANTLY INHIBITED IN ANY WAY. HE THOUGHT THERE WAS GREAT UNITY IN TURKEY ON THE CYPRUS QUESTION. IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION, ECEVIT SPECIFICALLY SAID THAT EVEN THE SUBJECT OF MAKING CONCESSIONS ON THE CYPRUS SITUATION COULD BE HANDLED DURING AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

6. COMMENT: WHILE NO TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES ARE NOTABLY FLEXIBLE ALL PARTIES IS NOW LEAVING THE GOVERNMENT.
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ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THAT CARETAKER AND THEN PRE-ELECTION STATUS WILL NOT HAVE SOME INHIBITING EFFECT ON ECEVIT'S CYPRUS LEADERSHIP.

7. AS FOR EARLY ELECTIONS, THIS TAKES A MAJORITY VOTE IN THE PARLIAMENT, WHICH IS POSSIBLE, BUT NOT EASY. ECEVIT CAN IN ALL PROBABILITY HOLD HIS RANK AND FILE ON THIS ISSUE. SO THE OUTCOME IS LIKELY TO BE DECIDED IN THE END ON WHETHER BOZBEYLI

CAN DO THE SAME.
MACOMBER

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